

Message Text

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PAGE 01 TEHRAN 06817 190740Z
ACTION NEA-07

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FM AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9425
INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEHRAN 6817

LIMDIS

EO 11652: XGDS 1 AND 4
TAGS: PDIP, PEPR, IR, ET
SUBJ: IRANIANS CONSIDERING CLOSING EMBASSY IN ADDIS ABABA

REF: TEHRAN 6680, ADDIS ABABA 3063

1. AT CHARGE'S INSTRUCTION, POLCOUNS UNDERTOOK TO PASS ESSENTIALS OF MESSAGE ADDIS ABABA REFTEL TO MFA DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR ASIA AND AFRICA SANANDAJI JULY 18. TREADING CAREFULLY, HE NOTED EMB ADDIS ABABA CONSIDERS ETHIOPIANS QUITE CAPABLE OF HARASSING FOREIGN DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS AS THEY HAD SUDANESE AND SOMALIS IN EARLY 1977 BUT SUCH HARASSING TENDED TO BE OVERT, UNSUBTLE AND ACCOMPANIED BY PRESS CAMPAIGN. U.S. EMB HAD NOT NOTICED SPECIAL HARASSMENT OF IRANIAN MISSION, AND SOME OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE DIFFICULTIES DESCRIBED BY IRANIANS ARE EXPERIENCED BY OTHER EMBASSIES IN ADDIS.

2. ON THE CONTRARY, EMB IN ADDIS CONSIDERED CONTINUED IRANIAN PRESENCE VERY USEFUL FROM POINT OF VIEW OF FREE WORLD INTERESTS, PARTICULARLY IN VIEW OF SOME CHINKS APPEARING IN HERETOFORE SOLID MENGISTU RELATIONSHIP WITH SOVIETS AND CUBANS. HE NOTED SERIOUSNESS OF ANY MOVE TO CLOSE EMBASSY
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PAGE 02 TEHRAN 06817 190740Z

AND DIFFICULTY REOPENING IT ONCE CLOSED.

3. IN PASSING, POLCOUNS MADE REFERENCE TO BATTLE FATIGUE WHICH CAN SOMETIMES AFFLICT AMERICAN AS OTHER DIPLOMATS IN DIFFICULT SITUATIONS. HE ASKED IF IRANIAN CHARGE HAD BEEN IN ETHIOPIA A LONG TIME. SANANDAJI IMMEDIATELY REPLIED CHARGE HAD BEEN THERE LONG TIME, THROUGH THE WAR, AND WAS

VERY GOOD, VERY INTELLIGENT MAN. HE SAID ONE THING SURPRISED IRANIANS. THEY WOULD HAVE UNDERSTOOD SOME HARASSMENT AT HEIGHT OF OGADEN FIGHTING, BUT IT WAS SURPRISING TO HAVE IT HAPPEN NOW. WHEN POLCOUNS ASKED IF PERHAPS ETHIOPIANS DID NOT RELAIZE THE WAY SITUATION WAS BEING INTERPRETED BY IRANIANS, SANANDAJI REPLIED DIRECT OFFICIAL CONVERSATION HAD TAKEN PLACE ON THIS SUBJECT IN ADDIS, AND ETHIOPIANS ANSWERED CALLING IRAN "AN ENEMY STATE."

4. SANANDAJI IN TURN ASKED IF AMERICAN EMB HAD DISCUSSED SITUATION WITH IRANIANS IN ADDIS BEFORE REPLYING. POLCOUNS SAID HE DID NOT THINK SO, PERHAPS IN VIEW OF BUSY LOCAL SCENE, BUT HE KNEW EMB HAD VERY GOOD RELATIONS WITH IRANIAN EMB.

5. SANANDAJI SAID HE WOULD REPORT OUR REPLY UPWARDS.

6. COMMENT: IT MAY BE THAT SANANDAJI WILL MULL OVER CONVERSATION IN PROCESS OF REPORTING IT AND PERCEIVE WHAT WE WERE TRYING TO TELL HIM. WE ARE NOT SURE OF HOW SENSITIVE HIS ANTENNAE ARE, HOWEVER, AND IT WOULD NOT SURPRISE US IF HE MISSED THE POINT.
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